



*Education That Works For a Lifetime*

To: The Honorable Thomas P. Gaffey, Senate Chair  
The Honorable Andrew M. Fleischman, House Chair  
Members of the Education Committee

From: Paul Susen, Chief Academic Officer Connecticut Community Colleges  
Darlene C. Ragozzine, Executive Director, Connecticut Charts-A-Course

Date: March 1, 2010

*Re: Raised Bill No. 275*

***AN ACT CONCERNING STAFF QUALIFICATIONS FOR SCHOOL  
READINESS***

Senator Gaffey, Representative Fleischman and Members of the Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony today and offer comments regarding **S.B. No. 275, AN ACT CONCERNING STAFF QUALIFICATIONS FOR SCHOOL READINESS**

The Connecticut Community Colleges support the legislative intent and purpose of this bill as it will continue to promote access to quality programs for preschool children in our state by assuring a qualified and competent early childhood workforce. More importantly, it sets a goal that we feel is achievable while establishing a high standard of competence for the early childhood workforce.

As you know, the 12 Connecticut Community Colleges each offers an Associate Degrees in Early Childhood Education. This past fall we had a record enrollment of 2,715, up 13% from the previous year. The early childhood programs continue to be among the highest enrolled academic programs within the colleges. The number of graduates also increased in these programs by 9% between 2008 and 2009. Clearly, the Connecticut Community Colleges are assisting publicly funded preschool programs to meet the current staff qualifications of a minimum of Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) or associates or baccalaureate degree and 12 credits in early childhood education. Through the CT Charts-A-Course program (CCAC), many of these individuals also receive scholarships to acquire training toward credentials and degrees. CCAC reports that last year 565 scholarships were given toward associate degree credits.

We support this bill that would change the current state statute, from ... *that on or after July 1, 2015 each classroom will be headed by a teacher with a minimum of a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development or related field or certified with an endorsement in early childhood or special education to ... at least fifty per cent of its teachers hold a bachelor's degree and the remaining teachers hold an associate degree*

This standard is consistent with much of the current early childhood research and recommendations and is consistent with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and Head Start standards.

We also support the language in this bill that calls for teachers ...[to] have completed a program of study approved by the Commissioners of Education and Higher Education. This would require an approval process for academic programs offering early childhood programs by the Commissioners of Education and Higher Education. This will assure that all programs meet certain competencies for teaching young children. Our associate degree programs are all currently engaged in a process that will result in all programs having NAEYC Associate Degree Accreditation by 2013. This initiative is three-fold:

1. It will align each program with the current national standards and competencies for associate degree programs;
2. It will meet the State Department of Education requirement for articulation between associate degree programs in early childhood education and baccalaureate degree programs in early childhood teacher certification and ;
3. It will give them a strong foundational base to meet these new state competencies, which will then allow their graduates to acquire the proposed Early Childhood Teacher Credential.

Enclosed with this testimony is the CCAC 2010 RBA submission, as well as a detailed chart that displays the current status of the educational level of the teaching staff in publicly funded programs. Darlene Ragozzine, Executive Director of CCAC can speak in more detail regarding these measures related to the early childhood workforce in the state.